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Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 11th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 12 October 2000, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Semakula Kiwanuka ..... (Uganda)

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00-68464 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 82: Effects of atomic radiation
(continued) (A/55/46; A/C.4/55/L.6 and L.7)

1. **Mr. Pohan** (Indonesia) expressed appreciation to the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation and welcomed the report contained in document A/55/46. The report was a comprehensive review of the effects of radiation exposure from various sources and depicted the magnitude and scale of such exposure. The report also drew attention to new challenges relating to global levels of radiation which the Scientific Committee intended to meet with new initiatives for assessing the sources of radiation, their levels and effects.

2. In the area of nuclear testing, previously undisclosed information had come to light concerning the number and yield of such tests. In that regard, it had become imperative for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to come into force and for countries to refrain from both atmospheric and underground testing.

3. For quite some time, Indonesia had maintained a cooperative working relationship with the Scientific Committee, whose reports had increased the understanding of radiation and its harmful effects. In view of the growing reliance on nuclear energy worldwide, Indonesia recognized the importance of adopting safety standards for the protection of the environment. That called for information-sharing on deficiencies in the operation of nuclear power plants and the implementation of appropriate safety measures. In that regard, it was to be hoped that the Scientific Committee and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) would play complementary roles. Indonesia commended the Scientific Committee's cooperation with other international organizations as well.

4. The Scientific Committee's role in disseminating information, especially in the areas of health, sustainable development and even peace and security, had become increasingly important. Indonesia commended its work and would continue to support its activities.

5. **Mr. Bhundar** (India) noted with pleasure that, in accordance with its mandate from the General Assembly, the Scientific Committee had completed its review of problems in the field of radiation and had submitted its thirteenth comprehensive report on sources and effects of ionizing radiation. India shared the Scientific Committee's concern about radiation exposure and potential health effects. The data provided on the effects of radiation from various sources indicated the adherence of various countries to the regulations in their atomic energy programmes.

6. India welcomed the continuing scientific efforts to understand the basic mechanisms for the impact of radiation on biological systems, as documented in the annexes to the Scientific Committee's report for 2000. For its part, it had initiated a systematic study of the effects of continuous low level exposure at the cellular, molecular and clinical levels on the health of the population in high natural background radiation areas in the state of Kerala. The results so far did not show any deleterious effects attributable to such radiation. India hoped that the Scientific Committee would devote its efforts to studying data on high natural background radiation areas in other parts of the world.

7. India shared the concern expressed by the Scientific Committee over the incorrect reporting by some sectors of the media on thyroid cancer incidence and other health effects of the Chernobyl accident.

8. **Mr. Haggag** (Egypt) expressed appreciation to the Scientific Committee for its publications and report, which were used by various international, regional and national organizations to plan measures for the protection of populations from the effects of atomic radiation. Egypt commended the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP), IAEA and the World Health Organization (WHO) for their cooperation with the Scientific Committee in conducting comprehensive research on the sources and effects of ionizing radiation which could serve as a veritable textbook example of international cooperation.

9. The Egyptian delegation welcomed the high degree of attention devoted by the Scientific Committee to radiation resulting from atomic testing in the atmosphere, especially as it was considered one of the fundamental man-made sources of ionizing radiation. In that connection, Egypt expected that the Scientific Committee would pursue its research, especially in the light of recent information on the levels of radiation to which populations in the vicinity of such testing were exposed.

10. The peaceful use of atomic energy could offer significant benefits in medicine, industry and agriculture. Egypt accordingly wished to recall the need for transfer of nuclear technology to the developing countries with no preconditions or discrimination, in accordance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

11. In the light of Egypt's call for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone and of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the region of the Middle East, his delegation wished again to proclaim the need for all nuclear facilities in the region to be covered by the IAEA's safeguards system. In that context, it should be recalled that the nuclear reactor in the Negev desert region of Israel, which was subject to no international controls or IAEA safeguards, constituted a real threat to Egyptian security and to the safety of peoples of other countries.

12. Egypt wished to become a sponsor of the draft resolution that was to be submitted under the item and hoped it would be adopted by consensus. The Egyptian Government was prepared to maintain and expand its cooperation with the Scientific Committee in all fields.

13. **Mr. Suanes** (Cuba) said that since its creation in 1955, the Scientific Committee had been playing an important role in providing objective, balanced and independent information on radiation sources and their effects on man and the environment. The Scientific Committee's reports were used as reference materials and facilitated the development of national and international standards for radiation protection. His delegation, which had a high regard for the Scientific Committee's work, wished to underline the need for its continued cooperation with various organizations and institutions of the United Nations system, including WHO, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and IAEA. Enhanced cooperation, interchanges and consistent support for the Scientific Committee's work would make it possible to achieve even more impressive scientific results for the benefit of mankind.

14. In most countries of the world, atomic energy was acknowledged as an alternative means of satisfying increasing energy demands. The use of atomic energy in medicine, industry and agriculture was continually expanding and had taken on great importance for the developing countries. Countries that had attained a higher level of development should accordingly give other countries access to the benefits associated with the use of nuclear energy. That was why, in the discussions on the current item, the question of transfer of technology and technological cooperation took on particular importance. A special responsibility for truly promoting transfer of and access to technology – on an equitable basis and with no preconditions – lay with the countries which, owing to historical circumstances, were better endowed with resources.

15. Although Cuba was not a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and, accordingly, was bound by no obligations to conclude safeguards agreements with the IAEA, it had voluntarily placed its nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards and was observing them rigorously. In October 1999, Cuba had signed with the Agency an additional protocol to its safeguards agreement and had been the first country in the world to conclude an agreement on the application of the safeguards system under INFCIRC/66. Cuba would continue to develop its programme for the peaceful use of nuclear energy under conditions of complete openness to scrutiny and had taken up the cause of nuclear disarmament and total prohibition of nuclear weapons.

16. The Cuban delegation had taken note of the statement by the representative of Belarus and in that connection wished to indicate that in recent years Cuba had accepted for treatment more than 10,000 children who had suffered as a result of the Chernobyl accident.

17. In conclusion, he noted that the work of the Scientific Committee was gaining greater importance every day for averting the dangerous effects of radiation on man and the environment and that only international cooperation in the peaceful use of atomic energy could eliminate that threat. The primary goal of joint efforts must be to do away with all nuclear weapons and threats connected with their possession. Mankind had no real alternative to general and complete disarmament, just as there was no alternative to cooperation.

18. **Mr. Hafiana** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that nuclear pollution was a serious problem of the times and his country had been giving it serious attention in view of the threat it represented for present and future generations. His delegation was worried by the rising level of radiation exposure, particularly in Arab countries, owing to nuclear activity in nuclear-weapon States that raised concern on the part of the entire

international community, and especially of the Arab States. Israel had all types of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, had rejected the repeated appeals of the international community to convert the region into a nuclear-weapon-free zone and was refusing to allow IAEA inspections of its nuclear facilities. That could create a real threat and even lead to a disaster with unimaginable consequences. That was why it was essential to take all possible steps to force Israel to place its nuclear reactors under IAEA inspection and to destroy its nuclear arsenal.

19. Despite the optimism generated by the nuclear safety measures already adopted by numerous countries, additional action was needed to do away with the threat. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya considered that regional efforts should be focused on ensuring that scientific achievements in the nuclear field were used for peaceful purposes and hoped that a regular exchange between countries of information on the research undertaken would be set up.

20. It was essential to put an end to all activities that caused radioactive pollution of the land, sea and air. The nuclear Powers must stop all nuclear testing for military purposes and move without delay to develop and implement a programme for the destruction of all nuclear weapons.

21. **Mr. Islam** (Pakistan) said that the United Nations Millennium Declaration highlighted the need to "ensure that the benefits of new technologies ... are available to all". It was accordingly necessary to share resources and information in all areas of modern research, including on the effects of atomic radiation. His delegation was satisfied with the Scientific Committee's work in assembling radiological information and studying sources of radiation exposure and considered that its role in carrying out research and analysis in those areas had been pivotal.

22. Member States hoped to continue to benefit from the Scientific Committee's information on the sources and effects of radiation as the scientific basis for estimating radiation risk, developing radiation protection and safety standards and regulating radiation sources. Pakistan remained committed to providing the relevant data about doses, effects and risks from various sources of radiation.

23. Scientific research was geared to minimizing the effects of both natural and man-made radiation sources. The increase in radiation exposure from man-made sources was a matter of common concern. Although the largest doses of exposure came from the medical use of radiation, nuclear medical research must nevertheless not stop, owing to its immense benefits to mankind. The latest results of such research must be shared with all Member States, but at the same time, adequate measures must be taken against radiation exposure with a view to minimizing its adverse effects. Further research was also needed on the impact of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear reactor on the health of people in the region.

24. Research on the hereditary effects of radiation exposure was also vital, and Pakistan looked forward to the submission of the Scientific Committee's comprehensive report for the year 2001.

25. Pakistan would continue to assist the Scientific Committee in its work in the interests of achieving the collective goal of minimizing the effects of atomic radiation on mankind and the environment.

26. **Mr. Zohar** (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the assertions by the representatives of Egypt and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya that Israel's research in the field of nuclear energy constituted a threat to those countries were not at all in line with reality.

27. In recent years Israel had been falsely accused of radioactive pollution of the groundwater on its border with Egypt. What had been lost from sight, however, was that the groundwater in that area flowed towards Israel: hence that country could not possibly be the source of the pollution.

28. In its research activities, Israel consistently attached paramount importance to strict safety requirements, whose observance was monitored not only by internal but also by external bodies, including at the governmental level. As to the issue of proliferation of nuclear weapons mentioned by the representatives of Egypt and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, it was outside the competence of the Fourth Committee.

29. Israel supported the Scientific Committee's efforts to improve the health of all people on the planet. Israel's achievements in radiation use for medical purposes were well known, and it was prepared to share them with the rest of the world in a forum such as WHO.

30. **Mr. Haggag** (Egypt), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, pointed out that there was nothing new in his country's mention of the Israeli reactor. He referred the representative of Israel to a number of resolutions and documents, including the resolution adopted every year by the First Committee concerning the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East. In it, the General Assembly called upon countries that had not yet done so to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to place their nuclear activities under IAEA safeguards. Egypt was making the same appeal.

31. He likewise cited the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, in which Israel was urged to accede to the Treaty and to place all its nuclear facilities under IAEA control.

32. Thus, there were international standards and regulations to which all countries of the region should adhere, especially Israel, which must likewise comply with the requirement of placing its nuclear activities under IAEA safeguards.

33. **The Chairman** announced that Bulgaria, France, India, Malta, the Philippines and the Russian Federation had become sponsors of draft resolution A/C.4/55/L.6.

34. He had been requested by the delegations concerned to postpone the consideration of the draft resolution until a later stage in the Committee's work because of ongoing consultations. If there was no objection, he would accede to that request.

35. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 18: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (Territories not covered under other agenda items) *(continued)*

Draft resolution on the questions of American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Guam, Montserrat, Pitcairn, St. Helena, the Turks and Caicos Islands and the United States Virgin Islands (A/C.4/55/L.5)

36. **Mr. Donigi** (Papua New Guinea) recalled that the original draft resolution on the small Non-Self-Governing Territories was contained in the report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (A/55/23, chap. XIII, sect. F). The changes incorporated in the revised draft concerned primarily the twenty-fourth preambular paragraph and paragraphs 14 and 15 on the question of tax havens.

37. The Special Committee had noted that the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development had established a mechanism for initiating, by July 2001, a dialogue on ways of improving international financial controls. In that connection, the Special Committee called on the administering Powers to assist the Territories concerned in establishing the financial controls required to combat money laundering, the circulation of proceeds from criminal activity and the financing of crime. At the same time, the Special Committee held the view that the introduction of financial controls must not be used as a pretext for limiting the freedom of the Territories concerned to set rates of taxation for persons who were domiciled in or citizens of those Territories.

38. He expressed the hope that the draft resolution on small Non-Self-Governing Territories would be adopted by consensus.

39. **Mr. Mekdad** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the Special Committee had demonstrated flexibility in its dealings with the administering Powers, as attested to by the amendments incorporated in the draft resolution under consideration. His delegation was pleased to observe the efforts made by some administering Powers in the context of their official cooperation with the Special Committee. Those administering Powers that were still not cooperating with the Special Committee must move in that direction, especially in view of the task of eradicating colonialism facing the world community.

40. *Draft resolution A/C.4/55/L.5 was adopted by consensus.*

41. **The Chairman** announced that the Committee had concluded its consideration of agenda item 18. There had been a fruitful exchange of views and in most instances consensus had been achieved, reflecting the importance attached by the majority of delegations to the question of decolonization.

Other matters

42. **Mr. Islam** (Pakistan) announced that if his delegation had been present at the Committee's eighth meeting, it would have voted in favour of the draft resolutions submitted under agenda items 88, 89 and 90 and in favour of the draft decision relating to military activities. It would have voted against the proposed deletion of paragraph 7 of the draft resolution submitted under agenda item 89. It would have joined the consensus on the draft resolutions submitted under agenda item 91 relating to Western Sahara, New Caledonia and Tokelau and the draft decision on Gibraltar.

43. **Mr. Al-Merri** (Qatar) said that if his delegation had been present at the eighth meeting, it would have voted in favour of the draft resolutions submitted under agenda items 88, 89 and 90, in favour of the draft decision relating to military activities and against the amendment mentioned by the previous speaker.

44. **Mr. Cha** (Republic of Korea) said that if his delegation had been present at the eighth meeting, it would have voted in favour of the draft resolutions submitted under agenda items 88 and 89 and against the draft resolution relating to military activities. It would have abstained during the vote on the draft resolution under agenda item 90 and would have joined the consensus on the draft resolution submitted under agenda item 91 and on the drafts relating to Western Sahara, New Caledonia, Tokelau and Gibraltar.

45. **Mr. Hafiana** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that at the eighth meeting, his delegation had voted against the amendment to the draft resolution submitted under agenda item 89, but its vote had not been reflected in the records of that meeting.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.

United Nations A/C.4/55/SR.12

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Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 12th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 16 October 2000, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Kiwanuka ..... (Uganda)

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Agenda item 83: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space

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00-69195 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 83: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (A/55/20, A/55/153)

1. **The Chairman** said that the United Nations had begun the consideration of the peaceful uses of outer space at the very start of the space age, a period marked by the launch of the first satellite in October 1957. Even then, the international community had been concerned that it was only a few countries with an advanced degree of technological and economic development that were able to explore and utilize outer space to their own benefit.

2. Outer space had now become an arena for international cooperation. What had started as the "space race" would culminate in the historic launch of a space flight to begin the permanent habitation of the International Space Station, a project in which 16 countries had participated.

3. Outer space had become an arena for international cooperation not by mere coincidence, but because over the years many countries had stressed the importance of international cooperation through the work of the United Nations and had made efforts to ensure that outer space was explored and utilized only for peaceful purposes. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space continued to provide an essential forum for discussing the exploration and uses of outer space. The United Nations had cemented international cooperation by establishing the international legal regime governing outer space activities.

4. The United Nations also played an important role in ensuring that the benefits of space activities were shared by developing countries. Efforts had to be strengthened in that area, however, even though more developing countries were now using space technologies for their social and economic development. The challenge was to meet the basic needs of people in developing countries. Many countries were aware of the usefulness of space science and technology for social and economic development, but that did not necessarily mean that space benefits were really reaching the people who needed them the most. Many people in developing countries, as well as their governments, could not afford those useful space tools. Even if they gained access to such tools through international cooperation, many did not know how to use them.

5. Efforts to promote the peaceful uses of outer space should focus on increasing educational opportunities for people from the developing countries in the fields of space science and technology. People around the world should be informed that space applications could improve their lives. The Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) had come up with a strategy to strengthen such efforts at the global level. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had already taken steps to turn that strategy into concrete actions. It had made progress, among other things, in identifying a mechanism to implement the recommendations of UNISPACE III, establishing partnerships with non-governmental organizations, involving young people in space activities and increasing public awareness of space benefits.

6. Following a recommendation of UNISPACE III, the General Assembly had declared the week of 4 to 10 October World Space Week. Special events had been held for the public in almost 30 countries as part of World Space Week. He hoped that more governments, organizations and indivduals around the world would take steps to promote the use of space benefits to meet the needs of people in the developing countries. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space would continue to lead the international efforts towards that goal.

7. **Mr. González** (Chile), Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, said that drawing on a consensus, the Committee had done a great deal of useful work and had made a significant contribution to the creation of the international legal regime governing outer space activities. One of the Committee's major achievements had been the convening of UNISPACE III, at which the Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development had been adopted by consensus. The Declaration contained a series of recommendations on activities in such areas as environmental protection, rational use of resources, the application of space technology to guaranteeing the security, development and well-being of people, public information, etc. The measures recommended by UNISPACE III could further the achievement of goals in other areas of United Nations activities and promote

the realization of important initiatives in the development of human potential.

8. Submitting the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, he noted that it covered such matters as ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes, the work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its thirty-seventh session, the work of the Legal Subcommittee at its thirty-ninth session and spin-off benefits of space technology. The Committee and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee had made major progress in the adoption of concrete measures to carry out the recommendations of UNISPACE III. The Committee had identified a mechanism for implementing those recommendations and, in the period 2001 to 2004, would devote a separate agenda item to the consideration of progress made in that area. The Committee had also considered the plan of action proposed by the Office for Outer Space Affairs in compliance with the General Assembly's request to ensure that the Office be provided with adequate resources to implement specific actions based on the recommendations of UNISPACE III. The measures proposed in that regard covered the strengthening of the role of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its subsidiary bodies; the implementation of programmes for capacity-building in the field of space law; the development of new training modules and projects for the application of scientific and technological achievements to outer space; and public information activities.

9. One of the main recommendations of UNISPACE III concerned a better partnership with industry, and the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee had accordingly organized for the first time a symposium to study submissions by space industries. In 2001 a symposium was to be organized on the theme of applications of global navigation satellite systems in improving the productivity of national and regional infrastructure.

10. Another area in which progress had been made was public information. In accordance with the General Assembly's decision to declare 4 to 10 October World Space Week, the Office for Outer Space Affairs had developed a plan for its celebration. Representatives of all Member States, international organizations dealing with outer space and many scientific centres and museums had been invited to participate in the events. Another important matter connected with the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III was availability of resources. In accordance with the Conference's recommendation that a special voluntary fund be established, the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to modify the terms of reference of the Trust Fund for the United Nations Programme on Space Applications to include implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III. In line with the request of the General Assembly, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had agreed on a list of priority project proposals for inclusion in the Secretary-General's letter of invitation regarding contributions to the Trust Fund.

11. At the 2000 session, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee had also considered such topics as international cooperation in human spaceflight, use of nuclear power sources in outer space, space debris and space commercialization. In connection with the last-named topic, he said that during the session, the Committee on Space Research and the International Astronautical Federation had organized a symposium on the theme "Space commercialization: an era of new opportunities". In recognition of the contribution made by those two institutions, the Committee had adopted a recommendation to invite them to arrange a symposium on the theme "Terrestrial hazards from outer space objects and phenomena" during the Subcommittee's next session. The Committee had recommended the inclusion in the agenda for the Subcommittee's next session of the following three new topics: means of and mechanisms for strengthening international cooperation and increasing the use of space applications and services within and among entities of the United Nations system; creation of an integrated, space-based global natural disaster management system; and government and private activities to promote education in space science and engineering.

12. Turning to the activities of the Legal Subcommittee, he said it had continued to consider matters relating to the definition and delimitation of outer space and to the character and utilization of the geostationary orbit and, at its thirty-ninth session, had finally agreed on recommendations on that topic. In accordance with the three-year work plan, it had begun its review of the concept of "launching State" which it would pursue at its next session. During the Legal Subcommittee's thirty-ninth session, the International Institute of Space Law and the European Centre for Space Law had organized a symposium on legal

aspects of space commercialization. Intensive discussion was given by the Subcommittee to new agenda items for its next session and it was agreed to consider the draft convention prepared by the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law on international interests in mobile equipment and the preliminary draft protocol thereto on matters specific to space property.

13. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had endorsed the recommendation of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee that a colloquium on the theme "The human dimension in space science and technology applications" should be organized during the Committee's next session with the participation of eminent scientists, sociologists and philosophers. The Committee had also considered the issue of enlargement of its membership and had recommended that it be included in the agenda of its next session.

14. One of the challenges in future years would be to link the achievements of science and technology with the development of human potential. The exchange of information on existing space technology and sharing of access to it were important, but they were not sufficient. Measures had to be adopted with a view to ensuring that the benefits of the application of such achievements could be used by all those living in extreme poverty in the developing countries. Eliminating poverty was not only the goal of the development process but also a challenge of the utmost importance for the enjoyment of human rights in the twenty-first century, and the application of space technology could help to ensure that the populations of developing countries were able to exercise basic human rights. In that connection, international cooperation in space was of great importance. Many countries were carrying out joint space programmes. The participation of non-governmental institutions in such cooperation must also be facilitated, and the private sector and non-governmental organizations had an important role to play in that regard. That role had been acknowledged with the adoption by the General Assembly in 1996 of the Declaration on International Cooperation in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space for the Benefit and Interest of All States, Taking into Particular Account the Needs of Developing Countries.

15. **Mr. Bossière** (France) spoke on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia, the associated countries of Cyprus and Malta and a member of the European Economic Area, Norway, aligned themselves with his statement.

16. The European Union participated actively in space activities and carried out a variety of scientific projects, including for the development of the automatic satellite navigation system "Galileo" and a global monitoring system for environmental protection and safety which would have practical applications in a broad range of fields, including the prevention of natural and man-made disasters and the mitigation of their effects.

17. The European Union welcomed the report adopted at UNISPACE III in 1999 in Vienna, which provided for concrete measures to be taken in areas such as environmental protection and rational use of resources, enhancing scientific knowledge about outer space, protection of the space environment and development of international cooperation in that area. The European Union supported the plan of action for the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III endorsed by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space at its June 2000 session.

18. The European Union held the view that space activities must be carried out in line with two fundamental principles, namely that space technology must promote social, economic and cultural development as well as the protection of the terrestrial and spatial environment and that access to outer space must be regulated on an equitable basis in the light of the real needs of the developing countries. At its twenty-ninth session, the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) had requested that consideration be given to situations in which scientific and technical progress could pose a threat to society. The European Space Agency had accordingly developed three principles, namely the provision of free access to outer space as part of the common heritage of mankind, the creation of conditions for unimpeded observation of the universe by astrophysicists and the use of outer space with due regard for human rights and fundamental freedoms. In that connection he drew attention to the need for priority consideration to be given to measures to eliminate space debris, including through the disposal of satellites in geostationary orbit at the end of their

useful life and reducing the danger of explosion of upper stages of launch missiles. In conclusion, he called for a solution to be found to the shortfall in resources of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, whose budget for the upcoming biennium had been reduced.

19. **Mr. Ri** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that outer space had become one of the fields in which the disparity between developed and developing countries was the most serious. A few countries that possessed outer space technology were commercializing the results of scientific study of outer space and, setting political conditions, were attempting to avoid the transfer of technology to developing countries and even obstructing, without any substantiated reasons, the self-supported outer space exploration of such countries. Some States were openly ignoring the relevant international laws and abusing outer space in pursuit of military predominance: they talked, for example, about a theatre missile defence system and a national missile defence system. It was intolerable that certain countries should take issue with his country's launch of an artificial satellite with a view to justifying their own efforts towards the militarization of outer space.

20. In order to achieve real international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space in the new century, the following problems had to be resolved. First, the right of developing countries to the exploration of outer space should be respected and steps must be taken to ensure that all countries benefited equally from the results of outer space exploration in accordance with article I of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies. The United Nations should endeavour to make the scientific and technological results of outer space exploration contribute directly to the sustainable development of the developing countries. In that regard it was necessary to set up a mechanism to ensure that the results of outer space technology served the majority of human beings. Second, in order to ensure the success of peaceful exploration of outer space in the twenty-first century, militarization must be ended. One of the priorities should be the dismantling of military satellites that violated and threatened the sovereignty of other countries and, in particular, prevention of the creation of a national missile defence system and theatre missile defence system that used satellites in outer space. The Office for Outer Space Affairs and the Legal Subcommittee must devote much more attention to taking decisive steps to stop the militarization of outer space.

21. After the successful launch of its first artificial satellite on 31 August 1998, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had entered into a new stage of self-supported development of outer space science and technology. The satellite launch had been peaceful in all aspects and constituted a contribution to the development of outer space science and technology throughout the world. On the basis of the success already achieved, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would endeavour actively to promote technological cooperation and exchange with other countries in order to ensure the peaceful uses of outer space.

22. **Mr. Guan Jian** (China) said that as required by General Assembly resolution 54/67 of 6 December 1999, at its forty-third session the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had resumed its consideration, as a matter of priority, of ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes. During the deliberation on that agenda item, the question of the prevention of militarization and of the arms race in outer space had received great attention. A number of delegations had expressed the view that the development and testing of weapons systems in outer space and the utilization of space systems for military purposes would intensify the militarization of outer space and trigger a cosmic arms race. That went against the tide of the times, violated the fundamental principle of peaceful uses of outer space established by the 1967 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies and was not conducive to the maintenance of international peace and security.

23. An international legal system should be established to prevent the militarization of outer space and an arms race there and the relevant international agreements should be concluded expeditiously on the basis of negotiation. The resolution adopted at the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) reaffirmed the notion that progress in the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space was in the common interest of mankind and that the prevention of an arms race in outer space was an essential condition for the promotion of international cooperation in that field.

The Committee must accordingly devote adequate attention in its work to consideration of the question of preventing the militarization of outer space and a cosmic arms race.

24. The Chinese Government had consistently held that the ultimate purpose of the exploration and utilization of outer space must be to create a better space for the survival and development of humanity. The space activities conducted by all States should contribute to friendly cooperation and social progress and to the maintenance of international peace and security. Although the total demilitarization of outer space had yet to be realized de jure, it undoubtedly represented the direction in which the development of international space law should now go. In that connection, it was necessary to negotiate and conclude as soon as possible an international agreement on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

25. At the Committee's forty-third session, the delegations of Bulgaria, Colombia, China, Greece, Iran and the Russian Federation had submitted a working paper containing a proposal that, at its fortieth session in 2001, the Legal Subcommittee should begin discussing a new agenda item on the feasibility of formulating a unified and comprehensive convention on international space law. In the view of the Chinese delegation, that was a constructive proposal that deserved the active support of the international community, especially as the work on such a convention promised to be a daunting task that could be achieved solely through the political will to strengthen cooperation on the part of Governments. The Chinese delegation stood ready to work with all delegations for the early achievement of that goal.

26. At its fifty-fourth session, the General Assembly had approved the recommendation of UNISPACE III to declare 4 to 10 October of every year World Space Week in order to celebrate at the international level the contributions of space science and technology to the betterment of the human condition. In order to ensure the successful celebration of the first World Space Week, the Chinese Government, as one of its main initiators, had elaborated and implemented its own programme for 2000. The programme's objective was to disseminate knowledge, reject superstition and pseudo-science, increase space knowledge among young people and encourage the general public's participation in and support for space activities. A variety of events had been held in many cities, including a conference attended by more than 2000 representatives of all sectors of society, the issuance of commemorative stamps, the publication of popular space science materials geared to young readers, the donation of books to universities and schools and the organization of popular space science exhibitions. China would continue to contribute to the great cause of exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes.

27. **The Chairman** suggested that the list of speakers on agenda item 83 be closed on 16 October 2000, at 6 p.m. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee agreed to that suggestion.

28. *It was so decided.*

29. **The Chairman** announced that delegations wishing to participate in the general discussion under the agenda item should inscribe their names on the list as soon as possible, in order to facilitate the full and productive utilization of the Committee's resources.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.

United Nations A/C.4/55/SR.13

General Assembly
Fifty-fifth session

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Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 13th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 17 October 2000, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Kiwanuka ..... (Uganda)

Contents

Agenda item 83: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (*continued*)

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00-69504 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 83: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (*continued*) (A/55/20, A/55/153)

1. **Mr. Gatilov** (Russian Federation) said that the threat of militarization of outer space posed a special problem. By launching space systems for monitoring, communication and navigation, military establishments assisted in the formation of a climate of trust and predictability and facilitated verification of international agreements on arms limitation. On the other hand, such space systems could undermine global strategic stability.

2. The Russian Federation was convinced that outer space must remain an arena of exclusively peaceful cooperation. That was the aim of the initiative put forward by Vladimir V. Putin at the Millennium Summit for the convening under United Nations auspices of an international conference on the prevention of the militarization of outer space.

3. The essence of the initiative was to mobilize international efforts to exclude the deployment in outer space of weapons of any kind, abandon the use or threat of use of force in or from outer space and prevent an arms race in outer space. A clear legal foundation was needed to achieve that goal, given the gaps in today's norms of international space law.

4. The emergence of new forms and directions of cooperation in outer space, including on a commercial basis, the intensification of the space activities of the State and private sectors and the rapid progress of space technologies made it necessary to adapt international law to today's requirements. At the forty-third session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), the Russian Federation had supported an initiative to discuss within the framework of the Committee the feasibility and desirability of elaborating a United Nations convention on international space law. The initiative corresponded to the common desire to ensure progressive development of international law and to strengthen the role of the United Nations and its auxiliary bodies. There was also a need to amend the five main outer space treaties now in force, although their principal provisions must be left intact.

5. The development of a comprehensive convention on international space law with due regard for the sovereign rights of States could help to resolve such difficult issues as the delimitation and definition of outer space, control of space pollution, management of scientific research and commercial activities in outer space, registration of space objects, protection of intellectual property, responsibility and the settlement of disputes.

6. The creation of such an instrument would obviously require considerable efforts by the entire international community. The Russian Federation accordingly advocated further progress in international space cooperation and more active efforts by States to implement the United Nations Programme on Space Applications. It favoured the strengthening of the role of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its subcommittees on the basis of reforms, enhanced effectiveness and representativity and the reduction of budgetary expenditures for their activities.

7. **Mr. Khurana** (India) said that in recent years the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had worked well to promote international cooperation in outer space, including by focusing the work of its forty-third session on implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III).

8. India attached great importance to the implementation of the strategy aimed at meeting the challenges identified in the Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development and welcomed the two work plans adopted by the Committee at its forty-third session, one on the implementation of an integrated, space-based global natural disaster management system and the other on increasing the use of space applications and services within the United Nations system and among United Nations specialized agencies and bodies. It hoped that the Trust Fund for the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, established to implement the recommendations of UNISPACE III, including those on support for the activities of regional centres for space science and technology education, would receive generous support.

9. Conscious of the importance of space applications in the development field, India had focused its space programme on the application of space technology for national development. INSAT-3B, the first satellite in the INSAT-3 series, had been launched on 21 March 2000 with the mission of facilitating business communication using very small

aperture terminals (VSATs) and of broadcasting community education programmes. The Government had also approved measures to permit the allocation of INSAT system capacity for non-governmental users and the use of foreign satellites, under special circumstances, for satellite communication services in India.

10. Remote sensing applications were used in two projects in India: the National Drinking Water Mission and the Natural Resources Information System, which furnished remote sensing images and remote sensing-based information, respectively. The Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific, which was affiliated with the United Nations and based in India, continued to make good progress in its work.

11. **Mr. Ahmad** (Malaysia) said his country feared that the development and testing of weapons systems in outer space and the recent application of space systems for military purposes would intensify the militarization of outer space and trigger an arms race there. Since the existing legal regime was insufficient, an international regime must be developed to prevent such a phenomenon. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space should consider the possibility of establishing a mechanism to coordinate its work with related bodies, in particular with the Conference on Disarmament.

12. Malaysia had entered the space arena with the launch of TiungSAT-1, its first micro satellite for observation of the earth for meteorological, forestry, agricultural and natural disaster prevention purposes. Conscious of the limitations of its resources, however, Malaysia was actively seeking international cooperation. It had already established strong links at the regional level with members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in the areas of remote sensing, satellite data reception and distribution and haze prevention. It was also cooperating with several States Members of the United Nations.

13. Malaysia was concerned by the attempts of some Member States to create a comprehensive convention on international space law. It believed that the existing legal regime was adequate to govern the exploration and uses of outer space, and that it would be practical for Member States, after having reviewed their domestic laws on outer space, to adhere to and apply the international legal instruments governing outer space.

14. Turning to the membership of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, he said his delegation felt that it should be enlarged in order to enhance its role and, by the same token, to abolish the practice of sharing seats on a rotating basis so that the members concerned might become full members of the Committee. Malaysia welcomed the Committee's recommendation that the issue of enlargement of its membership be included in the agenda for its forty-fourth session.

15. **Mr. Zohar** (Israel) said that, having played an active role in UNISPACE III, Israel was following with great interest the work of COPUOS and was involved in the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space. The Israel Space Agency, established in 1983, had the task of promoting space-related activities in Israel. In 1988, Israel had entered the space age with the launch of the first OFEQ satellite. The Shavit launcher had subsequently served to propel other satellites into outer space. Building on those successes, Israel planned to develop several EROS (Earth Remote Observation System) commercial satellites, the first of which was scheduled for launch at the end of 2000. In 1996, the Israeli geostationary satellite for the Middle East and Eastern Europe (AMOS), equipped with nine transponders and two beams, had been launched on Ariane-4. In 1998, a Zenith launcher had carried the micro satellite TECHSAT into outer space together with several scientific payloads. Three Israeli-made satellites were currently orbiting the earth.

16. Israel was continuing to build an infrastructure geared towards achieving optimal economic and commercial results by making use of its technological advances in certain fields, notably in the use of small satellites, space propulsion and remote sensing. It was carrying out a number of research programmes, including digital elevation models (DEM), mapping of geomorphology and seismology in the Jordan Valley, remote environmental observation, use of the Global Positioning System (GPS) for geodetic and geophysical applications and atmospheric and meteorological studies.

17. Israel was also carrying out a number of collaborative projects with various partners, including the Russian Federation (TAUVEX telescope), the Netherlands (participation in the scientific project SLOSHSAT to investigate sloshing in satellite fuel tanks) and German companies (feasibility study on the development of the "David" small commercial remote-

sensing satellite). It had established a ground receiving station where images from the French satellite SPOT and the European satellite ERS were received. It was preparing the Mediterranean Dust Experiment (MEIDEX), to be carried on a launch vehicle of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Together with Israeli universities, the Israel Space Agency had established the ISA-MEIDA programme (Israel Space Agency - Middle East Interactive Data Archives) as part of the Earth Observing System Data and Information System (EOSDIS), NASA's world-wide net. Israel would participate in the European Geostationary Navigation Overlay System (EGNOS). Lastly, the Israel Space Agency had signed cooperation agreements with NASA, the Centre national d'études spatiales (CNES) and the German Aerospace Center (DLR) and a memorandum of understanding with the Russian Space Agency and planned to sign cooperation agreements with India and Ukraine.

18. **Mr. Valdivieso** (Colombia) said that the progress achieved in space technology should become an instrument for the development of all countries. He welcomed the fact that a French proposal co-sponsored by the Colombian Government had resulted in an agreement on the rational and equitable use of frequency bands and of the geostationary orbit which had been adopted by consensus in the Legal Subcommittee and endorsed by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. His delegation hoped that the principle of equitable access would be reflected in the activities of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU): it was important to strengthen the coordination between ITU and COPUOS. Colombia encouraged the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee to continue its work on the definition of the geostationary orbit and believed it would be useful to restart the discussions, long deferred, on the definition and delimitation of outer space.

19. His delegation also believed that the existing legal regime must be adapted and strengthened to take account of new advances and challenges, and it encouraged Member States to examine the possibility of adopting a general convention on space law, like the one on the law of the sea. Space activities should be carried out on the basis of respect for the following principles: the benefit of humanity, the peaceful uses of outer space and the interests of the developing countries. In that context, Colombia called for the reinforcement of the mechanisms for international cooperation. UNISPACE III had permitted the identification of several applications of space technology to sustainable development, and his country deemed the implementation of the commitments made at the Conference to be of great importance. Access to existing technologies should be linked to educational initiatives adapted to particular national requirements, the objective being to train specialists who in turn would advance the cause of knowledge.

20. **Mr. Dausa Cespedes** (Cuba) said that since outer space was part of the common world heritage, three main principles should be defended by all States. The first was the need to preserve outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes and to promote international cooperation for such purposes, the objective being to achieve continued economic growth and sustainable development for all countries, in particular the developing countries. That was one of the rights of the developing countries and one of the duties of the industrialized countries that had mastered space technology. The gap between those two groups was still wide open, while at the same time, there was a steady increase in the economic and social spin-off benefits of space technology and in its applications to earth observation and natural disaster prevention. In that connection, his delegation would oppose any attempt to revise the Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space that did not take account of the interests and concerns of all countries, including the developing countries.

21. Second, an arms race in outer space must be prevented. In that connection, his delegation strongly objected to the missile defence programme of the United States of America, which by all accounts had not been entirely abandoned. The negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament with a view to elaborating an international instrument aimed at preventing an arms race in outer space were doomed to failure, in Cuba's opinion, owing to the position of certain nuclear Powers which were also space Powers. Cuba would pursue its cooperation with the non-aligned countries and any other country that opposed the use of outer space for anything other than peaceful purposes.

22. The third principle related to space law. His delegation considered that the existing legal instruments were not sufficient to prevent an arms race in outer space and believed that new measures must be adopted. It advocated the strengthening of the role of

the Committee and its two subcommittees and the abolition of the practice of sharing seats on a rotating basis, so that all the countries affected by that system could become full members of the Committee.

23. Affordable strategies must be devised to minimize the effects of space debris and to give more attention to collisions between space debris and space objects, in particular those with nuclear power sources. His delegation thanked the Committee for its efforts in that area and considered that the individuals responsible for damage must be made to answer for their acts. Cuba was of the view that the Vienna Declaration adopted at the close of UNISPACE III would provide guidance in the programming of activities and that regional cooperation as well as cooperation within the framework of the United Nations and Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space should be strengthened.

24. **Mr. Pohan** (Indonesia) said that international cooperation was indispensable in order to ensure that human activities in outer space benefited all peoples, including in the developing countries, and contributed to the sustainability of the planet. The use of outer space for peaceful purposes would help definitively to move beyond the cold war and the foregoing period. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had an important role to play, both in the further development of international space law and in enhancing its own methods of work.

25. His delegation welcomed the work done by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, especially with regard to the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III. The Conference had established objectives for the short and medium term that were of major importance for the developing countries. United Nations conferences, training courses and workshops would help developing countries to move forward in the application of space technology. Indeed, if only for economic reasons, it was no longer possible not to be involved in such space activities as remote sensing, which promoted sustainable development and environmental protection. It was therefore essential for the developing countries to be given access to remote sensing technologies at reasonable cost and in a timely manner. Initiatives such as World Space Week should be encouraged and developing countries must be assured of the resources required to take part in such activities.

26. His delegation reaffirmed the importance it attached to the deliberations of the Legal Subcommittee concerning the review and possible revision of the Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space. It had noted with satisfaction that that item had been retained on the agenda for the fortieth session of the Legal Subcommittee in 2001. As an equatorial country, Indonesia believed that the Legal Subcommittee should consider the utilization of the geostationary orbit and the definition and delimitation of outer space as matters of priority. The geostationary orbit being a limited resource, in was in the interests of all countries to harness its use on a just and rational basis. Indonesia invited Member States to engage in negotiations with a view to establishing an appropriate legal regime for the geostationary orbit.

27. His country was convinced that the spin-off benefits of space technology could yield benefits for humanity in such fields as human health, nuclear and environmental clean-up, satellite telecommunications and maritime and air transport. It regretted, however, that the levels of assistance and the training programmes proposed for developing countries were insufficient to enable them to benefit from space applications. The role of COPUOS should accordingly be reinforced.

28. **Mr. Miyamoto** (Japan) said that space technology had the potential to contribute to human progress, and international cooperation should be increased toward that end. His delegation acknowledged the important role of COPUO and welcomed the draft resolution before the Fourth Committee. Japan was anxious to see the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Vienna Declaration adopted at UNISPACE III and was pleased to see that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had adopted the Canadian proposal on how that might be done. It looked forward to participating in an in-depth discussion on that matter at the next meeting of COPUOS.

29. Referring to the recommendation in the Vienna Declaration concerning the development of the legal framework for space activities, he said that several proposals had been presented to the Legal Subcommittee, including on space debris and commercial aspects of space activities. It was important, however, first to gather technical data from Member States which had scientific and research

experience in the field. The goal was not to regulate space activities unnecessarily but to ensure that they were conducted in a fair manner and within the existing legal framework.

30. Japan was committed to the idea that the spin-off benefits of space activities should benefit all in such fields as communication, transportation and meteorology. In cooperation with other countries, it had used its remote sensing technology to help scientists to better understand the underlying mechanisms of such natural phenomena as El Niño, climate change as a result of the hole in the ozone layer, *inter alia*, and deforestation.

31. **Mr. Hodgkins** (United States of America) said that over forty years ago, the United States and 19 other countries had participated in the establishment of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, which had played a crucial role in advancing space cooperation. The only standing body of the General Assembly devoted to that purpose, the Committee offered a forum devoted exclusively to promoting the cooperative achievement and sharing of benefits from space exploration. In line with the recommendations set out in the Vienna Declaration, his delegation had joined Austria, Canada, Chile, Nigeria and Turkey in proposing a new item for inclusion in the Committee's agenda entitled "Space and society". That proposal had unfortunately not garnered the necessary support, but he was confident that a consensus would be reached in the near future. The United States welcomed the success of UNISPACE III, which had brought together leading scientists, government officials and private sector representatives. The involvement of the private sector in the Committee's work should be increased and its resources and expertise should be made available to the Committee.

32. Concerning the future work of the Committee and its subcommittees, he welcomed the restructuring of their agendas and the new approaches to the consideration of agenda items. The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee had addressed the issue of international cooperation in human spaceflight, providing an opportunity for an exchange of views on the development and utilization of the International Space Station. In 2001, the Subcommittee would consider a topic proposed by the United States on public and private initiatives to promote space education. He was also pleased to note that multi-year work plans had been adopted in order to coordinate the applications of space technology among United Nations agencies in the context of their respective mandates and to facilitate disaster management.

33. The Legal Subcommittee was entering the second year of work to review the concept of the "launching State" and would also take up the consideration of the draft convention of the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT) on international interests in mobile equipment and the preliminary draft protocol thereto on matters specific to space property. His delegation believed that the new methods of work and agenda items would permit each member of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to report on topics of long-standing interest and allow timely new topics to be introduced. Those were significant steps forward in ensuring that the Committee's work kept pace with the rapid developments in space exploration.

34. **Mr. Tomka** (Slovakia) said that his country fully supported the views expressed by the representative of France on behalf of the European Union and associated countries. Slovakia devoted a great deal of attention to the peaceful uses of outer space. It had established a national committee for research and peaceful uses of outer space as a governmental advisory body. In 1999, Slovakia's first astronaut had participated in a space mission carried out in cooperation with the Russian Federation and France. The mission had yielded new insights into space physics and life sciences and results in the context of ground projects on training and metabolism. Slovakia was ready to cooperate further and share the experience obtained.

35. Slovakia welcomed the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and supported the efforts to strengthen its role. It welcomed the initiatives taken by the Committee and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee to promote the use of space technologies within the United Nations system and was looking forward to a discussion on and the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III, activities in which it would like to participate actively.

36. **Mr. Al-Saud** (Saudi Arabia) said that the Vienna Declaration adopted at UNISPACE III stressed the need for bilateral, regional and international cooperation in implementing the Conference's recommendations and reaffirmed General Assembly resolution 51/122 entitled "Declaration on International Cooperation in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space

for the Benefit and in the Interest of All States, Taking into Particular Account the Needs of Developing Countries".

37. In that connection, his delegation wished to address the issue of enlargement of the membership of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. He drew attention to the fact that Saudi Arabia had submitted requests for membership in the Committee on several occasions and on 24 May 2000 had addressed to the Committee a memorandum on that subject in which it had outlined its expertise and activities with regard to outer space and the measures it had taken to encourage private sector participation in such activities at the national, regional and international levels. Since 1983, Saudi Arabia had had a remote-sensing site consisting of a receiving station for transmissions from many satellites of various nations and serving as the headquarters of ARABSAT. In 1985, one of its citizens had participated in a space mission on the shuttle Discovery. Saudi Arabia had just launched two telecommunication and research satellites in cooperation with the Russian Federation. Its candidacy had been supported by a great many delegations at the Committee's previous session. It hoped to contribute to the Committee with a view to strengthening it in conformity with the spirit and the letter of the Charter of the United Nations, which called for enhanced cooperation and the use of international institutions to ensure the economic and social well-being of all peoples.

38. **Mr. Picasso** (Peru) said that as part of Peru's commitment to the principle of peaceful, sustainable and fair use of outer space, it had followed with interest the evolution of the Committee's work over the past year. It had received with interest the proposals aimed at drawing up an international legal regime to prevent an arms race in outer space and centred on innovative activities in the service of society. In that sense, Peru endorsed the United Nations Programme on Space Applications but believed that the measures covered by the Programme could be carried out only through effective international cooperation based on access to technology, the elaboration of specific projects for space activities and the transmission of processed information that would have a practical and direct effect on the sustainable development of States.

39. His delegation was particularly interested in environmental protection and the management of natural disasters. The latter was of high priority for Peru which, throughout its history, had been severely affected by floods, droughts and earthquakes, among other natural disasters. Space applications should make it possible to quantify the causes of such disasters and to establish an early warning system based on remote sensing in order to prevent enormous human and material losses. His delegation was pleased that a new item entitled "Implementation of an integrated, space-based global natural disaster management system" had been included in the agenda for the thirty-eighth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee.

40. The United Nations Programme on Space Applications would have a much greater impact if the measures envisaged were diversified and decentralized through the establishment and reinforcement of regional education centres in science and technology. Peru accordingly welcomed the holding in October 1999 of the first meeting of the Governing Board of the Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Latin America and the Caribbean. Such institutions were essential to the implementation of the recommendations that had emerged from UNISPACE III.

41. The important role that space science and technology would play in the development of States was becoming increasingly visible. The essential challenge was to ensure that the benefits of such technology were placed at the disposal of all countries, particularly those in extreme poverty. In the United Nations Millennium Declaration, heads of State and Government had committed themselves to eradicating poverty; the applications of space technology were a key item for achieving that goal.

42. That was why his delegation did not understand why consideration of the item on the enlargement of the membership of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space continued to be postponed. Peru was one of the countries which shared a seat on the Committee on a rotating basis and had had the experience of seeing its participation in the discussion of items it considered of vital importance ended every two years. It believed that all States that were committed to the peaceful and sustainable use of outer space and that had shown signs of espousing the Committee's main goals should be authorized to participate in the Committee's work as full members. It welcomed the Committee's decision to consider the item at its upcoming session in 2001.

43. **Mr. Atieh** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his country welcomed the growing international tendency towards the peaceful uses of outer space, of which maximum benefits were expected in economic and social terms, especially for the developing countries. He also welcomed reductions in the budgets for military space programmes in favour of activities for development and environmental protection, but noted with concern that some programmes were still aimed at the militarization of outer space and its use for purposes contrary to peace and development. As part of the Syrian contribution to the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space, a citizen of that country had participated in a space mission several years ago and an early warning system had been established.

44. The peaceful uses of outer space presupposed a sincere commitment on the part of the international community and a framework of clear legal rules that were constantly being updated. The militarization of outer space and an arms race in outer space must be prohibited. To achieve that goal, the Conference on Disarmament and COPUOS must coordinate their efforts and activities, and it was the great Powers and the countries with significant space capabilities that were most directly concerned. Similarly, the issue of space debris must be given in-depth consideration, if only to prevent collisions, particularly with objects carrying nuclear components, and the States concerned should provide the necessary information on the components of their space vehicles and the fuels they used as well as on the safety measures undertaken.

45. His delegation welcomed the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (A/55/20) and the results of UNISPACE III, particularly the Vienna Declaration and the resolutions and recommendations on ways of enabling developing countries to benefit from progress in space technology. Lastly, he supported the request made by Saudi Arabia concerning enlargement of membership of the Committee and its request for inclusion in its membership. The Syrian Arab Republic hoped that the peaceful uses of outer space would help to strengthen security, stability and justice throughout the world.

46. **Mr. Eguiguren** (Chile), speaking on behalf of the countries of the Common Market of the Southern Cone (MERCOSUR) and the associated States (Bolivia and Chile), said that space technology had become indispensable to the socio-economic development of countries in so far as it permitted the timely acquisition of valuable information for policy coordination in various areas. He cited a number of regional meetings that had culminated in UNISPACE III and had permitted the MERCOSUR countries and the associated States to adopt common positions and to elaborate an informal plan of cooperation, particularly in the academic and technical fields. Such cooperation had made it possible, *inter alia*, to disseminate various practical applications of space technology, and many initiatives had been launched in that area, for example, the second international seminar on new satellite navigation systems, held in Montevideo in September 2000.

47. There was still, however, no clear awareness of the scope and implications of the applications of space technology. In that regard, he stressed the importance of such technology for protection of the environment, promotion of education and reduction of natural disasters. Satellites provided information that was crucial to the development of an appropriate method of environmental protection and natural resource management. Through mass literacy campaigns and distance teaching, they could help countries to enter the era of globalization, as education could contribute significantly to reducing the structural imbalances linked to that phenomenon. If made generally available, space technology could help to save lives in disaster situations and develop a climate of prevention.

48. Clearly, international cooperation, designated as a "duty" in General Assembly resolution 2625 (XXV), must play a decisive role and enable all Member States to tackle such major problems as extreme poverty with the most effective technological instruments. The decision of UNISPACE III to establish a voluntary United Nations fund for the purpose of implementing its recommendations attested to the importance of international cooperation, which was fundamental to the institution of more equitable relations among countries. The essential character of international cooperation had been underlined in the Principles Relating to Remote Sensing of the Earth from Outer Space (General Assembly resolution 41/65), adopted in 1986, and the Declaration on International Cooperation in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space for the Benefit and in the Interest of All States, Taking into Particular Account the Needs of Developing Countries (General Assembly resolution 51/122), adopted in 1996. Those two instruments, as well as the outer space treaties, made a clear distinction between "data" and "information". Many countries possessed an

enormous quantity of data but had limited means of processing it. They should be given the valuable information that they needed for economic and social development and efforts should be made to ensure that space technology served as a tool for solving real-life problems such as facilitating communication and disaster management. For ethical and practical reasons, the vicious circle of poverty and lack of access to modern technological resources must be broken, and a virtuous circle established in which such technology made it possible to achieve better standards of living.

49. Clearer legal norms or political arrangements should be worked out so that space technology might be used to create a framework of security for the populations of various countries and to give them the means of achieving progress. That idea was based on he principles of "positive discrimination" and "common heritage of mankind". In the Concepción Declaration, the countries of Latin America, the MERCOSUR countries and the associated States had reaffirmed the importance of continued progress in the elaboration of standards contributing to the development of international space law and had urged the States of the region to sign and ratify the relevant multilateral legal instruments.

50. In conclusion, he proposed the insertion in the draft resolution under consideration by the Working Group of a new paragraph, to read:

"*Recognizes* the timeliness and usefulness of the Space Conferences of the Americas for the Latin American countries and urges that a fourth such conference be organized. Further urges other continents to convene periodically regional conferences aimed at elaborating common technical and political positions on issues relating to outer space with a view to achieving convergence of views among the various members of the Committee."

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.

United Nations A/C.4/55/SR.14

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Fifty-fifth session

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Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 14th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 19 October 2000, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Kiwanuka ..... (Uganda)

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Agenda item 83: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (*continued*)

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00-69882 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 83: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (*continued*) (A/55/20, A/55/153; A/C.4/55/L.8)

1. **Ms. Filipenko** (Ukraine) said that based on its 50 years of experience in space research, her country had considerable industrial potential in space technology. Ukraine sought to adapt its space system to international standards of reliability and competitiveness and was currently involved in implementing its 1998-2000 space programme, which was aimed, *inter alia*, at strengthening international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space. To that end, it had participated in several international projects over the past few years, including the SeaLaunch programme under which satellites were placed in geosynchronous orbit. The consortium was working to increase the system's payload capacity by the end of 2002. Ukraine was contributing to the project with its Zenith 3 SL booster, which had already carried out three launches.

2. Ukraine was participating actively in the development of regional cooperation in the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space. At the Silk Road Cooperation Summit, held in New York on 8 September 2000, Ukraine had expressed its desire to make a real contribution to the SilkSat project for the development of a regional satellite telecommunication system to enable countries in the Europe-Caucasus-Asia transport corridor to benefit fully from the latest know-how in the information field.

3. Ukraine advocated the strengthening of the role of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) with a view to ensuring that outer space continued to be used for peaceful purposes.

4. **Mr. Islam** (Pakistan) said that his country hoped that the recommendations made by the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), a historic event that had helped to promote international cooperation in matters relating to outer space, would be implemented appropriately so as to achieve the established objectives. The spin-off benefits of space technology offered numerous and substantial advantages which must be made available to all Member States, including the developing countries that lacked the necessary resources to make use of such benefits. The international community therefore had a responsibility to further such spin-off benefits through cooperation.

5. Pakistan believed that in years to come the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee should devote special attention to the following issues: matters relating to remote sensing, use of nuclear power sources in outer space, means of and mechanisms for strengthening inter-agency cooperation and increasing the use of space applications and services within and among entities of the United Nations system, implementation of an integrated, space-based global natural disaster management system and the physical nature and technical attributes of the geostationary orbit and of its utilization and applications.

6. The Legal Subcommittee should pursue the following specific topics: its review of the status and implementation of the international legal instruments governing outer space, information on the activities of international organizations relating to space law, matters relating to the definition and delimitation of outer space and review and possible revision of the Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space.

7. Pakistan was not convinced of the desirability of drafting a universal comprehensive convention on international space law on the basis of the various existing instruments if there was no pre-existing consensus on them. It was committed to attaining the objectives set out in the Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development and, in accordance with a decision of the General Assembly, had celebrated World Space Week in 2000 with a view to heightening public awareness of the contributions that could be made by national and international activities in space science and technology to the country's socio-economic development.

8. There was still a disturbing danger that outer space might become a theatre for military rivalry, and it was therefore essential to elaborate a universal convention to prohibit an arms race. In the meantime, efforts must be bent towards the implementation of existing agreements on the peaceful uses of the products of space science and technology.

9. Pakistan supported the request made by Saudi Arabia and other interested Member States concerning the membership of COPUOS.

10. **Mr. Haggag** (Egypt) said that the establishment of COPUOS 40 years ago had been a historic event, as the Committee was the only body of the General Assembly concerned with strengthening international cooperation in the various fields of peaceful uses of outer space. Apart from its work in the technical, scientific and legal fields to ensure that the peaceful uses of outer space benefited all countries, the Committee was responsible for five international treaties on outer space.

11. Egypt hoped that the Vienna Declaration would be applied fully, in view of its importance in all development-related fields. In that connection, it welcomed the recommendations of the Working Group of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, particularly on the establishment of a mechanism to implement the strategy to address global challenges referred to in the Vienna Declaration. The Office for Outer Space Affairs should be provided with the necessary resources for that purpose to enable it to carry out the plan of action adopted by COPUOS. Egypt also hoped that at its fifty-ninth session in 2004, the General Assembly would review the implementation of the recommendations adopted at UNISPACE III, in accordance with paragraph 16 of General Assembly resolution 54/68. It urged all Member States to contribute to the Trust Fund for activities to implement the recommendations of UNISPACE III. It further hoped that international cooperation in the elaboration of appropriate plans for limiting the dangers for future missions posed by space debris would be strengthened. In that regard, the review of the Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space, adopted by the General Assembly in 1992 in its resolution 47/68, should be the subject of a scientific and technical consensus with the participation of all Member States on an equal footing. Egypt supported the enlargement of the membership of COPUOS in order to give all countries that so desired the opportunity to contribute to the work and deliberations of that body.

12. At the national level, Egypt had established a Council on Space Science and Technology with the task of developing a national programme for the peaceful applications of space exploration to State-set technological and development objectives. It would continue to cooperate in that field with the United Nations and Member States and would take advantage of the various international frameworks and forums for the regulation of space exploration. Lastly, Egypt was pleased to be hosting the Second International Conference on Earth Observation and Environmental Information, to be convened in Cairo from 11 to 14 November 2000, and hoped that the outcome of that meeting would contribute to the realization of the common objectives established by Member States.

13. **Ms. Achouri** (Tunisia) said that her country was following with interest the work of COPUOS in view of the important role played by space technology in sustainable development and the Committee's important task, namely to ensure that space exploration benefited humanity. Tunisia hoped that the recommendations of UNISPACE III and the Vienna Declaration would bear fruit. In 1984 it had established a National Outer Space Commission and in 1987 it had set up a National Remote Sensing Centre.

14. Given that outer space was part of the common heritage of mankind, its exploitation must benefit all, particularly the developing countries. Despite the progress made in that direction, the gap between developed and developing countries remained large and was growing, in view of the rapid pace of technological advances. Tunisia was convinced that, through cooperation and solidarity, the international community could ensure that science and technology were placed at the service of mankind to put an end to ignorance, exclusion and environmental degradation in a context of sustainable development. The United Nations, and particularly COPUOS, had a key role to play in achieving that objective.

15. **Mr. Apunte** (Ecuador) said that space applications helped to mobilize a response to major regional and international problems such as environmental protection, management of natural resources, prevention of natural disasters and enhancement of communication infrastructure. In his view, space science and technology could underpin sustainable development and lasting economic growth, the fundamental principles underlying the recommendations in Agenda 21.

16. His delegation supported unreservedly the proposals contained in paragraph 46 of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) (A/55/153), since they would help to strengthen the role of COPUOS in the

field of sustainable development. Ecuador welcomed the fact that remote sensing technology had made it possible, *inter alia*, to mitigate the impact of El Niño and was currently working, with the assistance of the international community, on the establishment of an international centre for the study of that natural phenomenon on the basis of satellite data.

17. His delegation wished to emphasize the importance of intensifying international cooperation with a view to implementing the Vienna Declaration, which set out recommendations in the following areas: protecting the environment and managing natural resources, using space applications for human security, development and welfare, advancing scientific knowledge of space and protecting the space environment, enhancing education and training opportunities and ensuring public awareness of the importance of space activities.

18. Turning to the equitable distribution and utilization of the geostationary orbit, he said it was regrettable that it had taken over 20 years to forge a consensus which took into account the interests of the developing countries and of countries with a special geographical position. Ecuador, which had never failed to defend the rights of such countries, endorsed the principles that had been the subject of consensus, as set out in annex III to the report of the Legal Subcommittee on its thirty-ninth session (A/AC.105/738). With regard to outer space law, he said that in view of the technological progress made and the legal breakthroughs achieved in recent years, his delegation supported the proposal by the Russian Federation for the development of a single comprehensive international legal regime.

19. **Mr. Hafiana** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that, conscious of the importance of using space for peaceful purposes in all domains of life, particularly in combating desertification and promoting environmental protection, his country had established a national remote sensing and space sciences centre and was participating in the scientific and technical work of various specialized international bodies. While welcoming the results of UNISPACE III, his country called for the curtailment of military programmes in outer space and an end to the arms race in outer space so that the resources thus conserved could be used for development and to combat the illness, poverty, ignorance and underdevelopment that still afflicted a large portion of humanity.

20. The developed countries were called upon to help the developing countries gain unconditional and unrestricted access to space technology and to facilitate the activities of the international bodies that were working for the dissemination of space data. It was equally important to coordinate and harmonize the activities of COPUOS and those of the Commission on Disarmament. Lastly, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya wished to underscore the importance of establishing at the international level principles and rules for the exploration and utilization of outer space and wished to declare its support for the enlargement of the membership of the Committee in order to give all countries a chance to make an effective contribution.

21. **Mr. Cassapoglou**, speaking on behalf of his country and of the Steering Committee of the Network of Space Science and Technology Education and Research Institutions for Central Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, said he wished to thank the Office for Outer Space Affairs for the support it had provided for the Network's activities over the past year. He expressed condolences to the Russian Federation on the recent death of the cosmonaut Titov and congratulated the United States and other countries that had participated in the latest mission of the shuttle Discovery.

22. **Mr. Lee** (Republic of Korea) said that the responsibilities of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space should be expanded in future owing to the fact that space technology had increasingly greater repercussions in daily life. He was grateful to the Committee for the important role it played, both in the development of a legal regime for outer space and in cooperation among States. UNISPACE III had made it possible to examine the progress made in space science and technology and to pave the way for cooperation aimed at the use of space technology for peaceful purposes. The Republic of Korea would work to implement the Vienna Declaration to that end.

23. The Republic of Korea had launched its own space programme in 1990 and had since placed several satellites in orbit. In 1999 alone, it had launched a scientific satellite, a geostationary satellite and a multi-purpose satellite. The country's medium- and long-term space development plan called for the launching of 19 satellites between now and 2015.

24. Noting that the latest enlargement of the membership of COPUOS had taken place six years

ago, he said that the admission of new members with the will and capacity to contribute to the peaceful uses of outer space could only be beneficial. The Republic of Korea was anxious to become a full member of the Committee and welcomed the amendment to paragraph 39 of draft resolution A/C.4/55/L.8 which would, it hoped, be adopted without a vote.

25. **Mr. González** (Chile), Chairman of the Working Group of the Whole on International Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses Of Outer Space, introducing draft resolution A/C.4/55/L.8, said that it addressed the work to be done by COPUOS and its subsidiary bodies in the upcoming year. The draft resolution was based on the corresponding text adopted the previous year, with some exceptions. Two preambular paragraphs had been added, one on the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III and the other on the importance of the use of space science and technology for economic, social and cultural development. The word *"Seriously"* should be inserted at the beginning of the fourth preambular paragraph.

26. The Legal Subcommittee had reached agreement on the question of the utilization of the geostationary orbit, an agreement reflected in paragraphs 4 and 7. Paragraph 26 related to a proposal submitted by Chile on behalf of the MERCOSUR countries and associated States. Paragraphs 27 to 33 concerned the follow-up to UNISPACE III, and in particular, the Committee's recommendations on that subject.

27. The results of the Working Group's discussions on the question of enlargement of the membership of the Committee were set out in paragraph 39, the text of which should be slightly revised to give more rigorous expression to what had been agreed. At the end of the paragraph, the word "include" should be replaced by the phrase "consider including". Paragraph 40 reflected the decision to include the issue of enlargement of membership in the agenda of the Committee's session in 2001. For his part, he intended to hold informal consultations in advance of the scheduled session, in order to move forward on an issue on which, in his opinion, there was already a broad consensus. He believed that it should be possible to resolve the question of enlargement of membership at the Committee's next session.

28. In conclusion, he suggested that in accordance with the established practice, draft resolution A/C.4/55/L.8 should be adopted without a vote.

29. **Mr. Dausa Cespedes** (Cuba) recalled that the Working Group had decided that the meeting mentioned in paragraph 18 would be organized with the participation of Member States. That aspect was not reflected in the text of the draft resolution and he requested that it should be revised accordingly. With regard to paragraph 39, he requested the insertion, at the end of the paragraph, of the word "full" before the word "members", so that the phrase would read "full members;". The reason for the insertion was that some countries shared seats on the Committee and without the insertion, the paragraph might be construed as referring solely to countries that were not yet members of the Committee but wished to join it.

30. **Mr. González** (Chile) supported the two proposals made by the Cuban delegation, which had indeed been discussed during the deliberations of the Working Group. The text of the draft resolution would be revised accordingly.

31. **Mr. Cassapoglou** (Greece) requested a number of editorial corrections to the text of the draft resolution. In the French language version of paragraph 24, the title of the Network should read: *"Réseau d'institutions d'enseignement et de recherche en science et technologie spatiales de l'Europe du Centre-Est et du Sud-Est"*. In paragraph 29, the word "above-mentioned" should be inserted before the phrase "plan of action", since the plan of action was mentioned in paragraph 28. In paragraph 43 of the French text, the latinism *"colloque"* should be replaced by the hellenism *"symposium"*, since a Greek initiative was being described. In the French text of the same paragraph, the words *"applications des sciences et des techniques spatiales"* should be replaced by the phrase *"applications de la science et de la technologie spatiales"*, a change that should also be made in paragraph 44.

32. **The Chairman** announced that the representative of Chile, who chaired the Working Group, endorsed the corrections proposed by the delegate of Greece. The draft resolution had financial implications which would be introduced at a later meeting, if there was no objection, as the relevant document was not yet available.

33. *It was so decided.*

34. **The Chairman** announced that the Committee had completed its general debate on agenda item 83.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.